

**Claim Amendments**

1. (currently amended) A method for communicating between a ~~service control point (SCP)~~, a service switching point (SSP) and an external Intelligent Peripheral (IP), comprising the steps of:

establishing a connection between the SSP and the external IP; and

while the connection between the SSP and the IP exists, transporting an Intelligent Network Application Part (INAP) operation inside a pass along message between the SSP and the IP where the pass along message includes a first part of fixed length and a second part of variable length, the first part defining a type of message of the second part;

in response to INAP operation inside said pass along message, performing the INAP operation by the IP.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the pass along message can be sent in either direction to transfer information.

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first part is one byte in length.

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the second part is an optional part of variable length from two to two hundred fifty seven bytes.

5. (original) The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of:

using bytes between numbers two hundred one and two hundred fifty seven of said pass along message for transferring the INAP operations.

6. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said INAP operation transferred is a play announcement (PA) operation.

7. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said INAP operation transferred is a prompt and collect user information (PCUI) operation.

8. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said INAP operation is a return report (RR) operation.

9. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said INAP operation is a specialized resource report (SRR) operation.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the SSP receives a play announcement operation from a transaction capability application part message sent from thea

service control point (SCP) and puts said transaction capability application part message into an optional part of a pass along message.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the SSP receives a play announcement operation from a transaction capability application part message sent from ~~the~~ service control point (SCP) and puts said transaction capability application part message into a user to user information parameter of a call progress message.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the SSP receives a prompt and collect user information operation from a transaction capability application part message sent from ~~the~~ service control point (SCP) and puts said transaction capability application part message into an optional part of a pass along message.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the SSP receives a prompt and collect user information operation from a transaction capability application part message sent from ~~the~~ service control point (SCP) and puts said transaction capability application part message into a user to user information parameter of a call progress message.

14. (previously presented) A method for communicating between a service control point (SCP), a service switching point (SSP) and an external Intelligent Peripheral (IP), comprising the steps of:

establishing a voice path connection between SCP and SSP;

sending a connect to resource request (CTR) from the SCP to the SSP for setting up a path to access an IP resource at the external IP;

sending an initial address message (IAM) from the SSP to the external IP to setup the path, with address digits of an ipRoutingAddress of said CTR being mapped into a called party number in the IAM;

sending back an address complete (ACM) message from the external IP and a second voice path is established between the SSP and the external IP;

sending a play announcement (PA) message from the SCP to the external IP for playing an announcement;

copying an Intelligent Network Application Part (INAP) operation PA from the SSP into a pass along message (PAM) without decoding the operation, and sending the PAM to the external IP;

decoding by the external IP the PAM and handling the play announcement operation;

sending a Specialized Resource Report (SRR) operation in another PAM from the external IP to the SSP;

extracting by the SSP the SRR from the another PAM and sending the SRR back to the SCP without decoding;

sending a Disconnect Forward Connection (DFC) from the SCP to the SSP to disconnect the external IP;

sending a release (REL) message from the SSP to the external IP to release the second voice path connection,

releasing said second voice path by the external IP in response to said REL from the SSP; and

returning by the external IP a release complete (RLC) message back to the SSP to acknowledge the release.

15 The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of disconnecting said voice path by said SCP.

16. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein said IP sends an answer message (ANM) as well as said SRR.

17. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein an UUI parameter of said IAM contains additional information from said SCP.

18. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein said INAP operation is relayed between said SCP and said IP without a direct link between them.

19. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein the SSP uses a plurality of signaling methods to set up the voice path to the IP.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of: determining at the IP if an INAP operation is requested based on the first part of the pass along message;

processing at the IP the INAP operation to be taken based on the second part of the pass along message.